

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.—BY HELEN R. DRAYTON.

WITHOUT actually belonging to the new school of women called blue-stockings, the Lady Anna F—— was still a most zealous defender of the rights of her sex. She was possessed with a mania for collecting relics of distinguished women; she wished to hand down to posterity all that in time past had ever rendered the situation of females illustrious. She was not conversant with history, and her luxurious and indolent life upon the banks of the Ganges had conduced but little to the development of her natural capacities, which were exercised rather in unrestrained childish curiosity than in serious study and reflection.

Upon her return from India, where she had the misfortune to lose her husband, the general, in the service of the company, she stopped at Alexandria in order to take passage in the steamboat for Malta. The winds had carried her speedily through the stormy ocean, sweeping round the mountainous shores of Africa to India, and now steam would again conduct her through the Mediterranean Sea to London, under the influence of warm and soothing breezes.

The immense fortune bequeathed by her husband enabled her to gratify to the utmost her taste for relics of historical association with regard to her sex. All the heroines of antiquity had in their turn contributed to her collection. She possessed an ear-ring of Semiramis, the queen who caused to be prosecuted gigantic works, possible only in imagination to the engineers of our day. She owned the hilt of the powerful sword with which Judith cut off the head of Holofernes. She had a piece of the vase containing the precious ointment with which the beautiful Magdalene anointed the feet of Jesus; and a pearl from the hat-band preserved by Mahomet for his well-beloved Ayesha, from the plunder of a city deserted by the Jews flying with their treasure;—indeed, even in passing through Jedda, where the packet-boat stops so long to take in stone-coal, the sustenance of the steam-engine, she purchased from a holy mussulman a tress of hair that had once adorned the head of Mother Eve, whose grave, according to Arabian traditions, was only twelve miles distant. Proud of her rich plunder, Lady Anna hoped also, in Europe, to acquire similar remembrances of distinguished women.

While she was in Alexandria, waiting for the departure of the Maltese packet-boat, she heard Cleopatra's needles spoken of. Immediately she was seized with the desire to possess, before leaving the East, something that had belonged to her who had enchained the lords of the world.

"Oh! if I might only have those needles!" said she, with the burning desire of a soul pining for the object of its adoration. "Perhaps with these needles the military dress of Cæsar was sewed, or Anthony's tunic constructed;—these are, indeed, trophies of the female sex! Is there any thing in which a woman can better confide than in these little instruments of her daily labour? The delicate fingers of Cleopatra have handled and threaded these needles! Perhaps they have even pierced her hands, and their points may have been reddened by that royal blood which was afterwards chilled by the poison of an asp. How pleasing to be able to see whether these needles were as fine as those of the English. Then will the scientific be able to determine whether the ladies of antiquity were as dexterous in the use of the needle as those of modern times! Then shall we have the key to a complete system of the art of sewing during the early ages! Yes, at any expense, must I have this prize! Should the needles of Cleopatra cost me the half of my possessions, still will I own them."

Possessed with this intention, Lady Anna betook herself to the consul-general of her nation, truly thinking that through him her designs for the possession of Cleopatra's needles might be advanced. His Excellency, C——, who had served in India, and was aware of the immense wealth of his friend, General F——, thought in good truth that the widow contemplated taking one of these far-famed pyramids in order to present it to the British Museum at London. With the greatest readiness he furnished her with a letter of introduction to the governor at Alexandria, who was the first officer in the Pacha's service, and at that time ruled lower Egypt. Notwithstanding her sex, Lady Anna waited in person upon Mokaram-Bey, and informed him of the cause of her visit.

Mokaram-Bey is the son-in-law of Mehemet-Ali, is the richest landholder in Alexandria, and possesses upon the banks of the canal a very beautiful palace, the cool, shady gardens of which are often enjoyed by Europeans for walking and parties of pleasure. Here also the Bey's seraglio is usually kept, for although he has acquired a little of the European gallantry and esteem for women, he is still too thoroughly a Turk to exist without a harem. His character is an indescribable mixture of the feelings and dispositions of both nations.

Thirty years had rolled over Lady Anna's head, ten of which had been passed beneath the burning sun of India, but still was she a woman of extraordinary beauty. She was tall and well-formed, having a light step but stately bearing, and the

of her eye showed her fully sensible of her own dignity. The sun of the Ganges had not often touched her fair skin, so much care had she taken to preserve herself from its influence. And when her golden locks were seen flowing luxuriously over the roses and lilies of her countenance, it would have been said that she had just left the thick, cool mists of the Thames. She was one of those beauties, so seldom found in the East, whom the Turks figure to themselves, not as houries, but angels, and who are the more pleasing to them as well from the charms of contrast as of novelty.

Although the English lady could only communicate with the governor through the medium of a dragoman, still she contrived to introduce her wishes with rare eloquence; for she burned with anxiety for the needles of Cleopatra. The Bey observed this, and replied with much politeness and without assuming the official tone.

"For myself, *Miladi*, I would most willingly grant what you desire; at present, however, it is necessary first of all to be invested with power from the Pacha. You are well aware that *Mehemet-Ali* has always shown himself generous, I might almost say prodigal, with regard to the antiquities of Egypt. He has taken pleasure in bestowing them, as well upon nations as private individuals, and he has seldom opposed the removal even of the most valuable objects. The valley of the Nile has been completely examined, plundered, and laid waste, by the antiquarians of the West. Now, however, *Mehemet-Ali* thinks it quite time to put an end to this robbery, before Egypt shall be scattered over the whole face of Europe, and the banks of the Nile be the only spot where antiquities are not to be found. He has already given directions to establish a museum at Cairo, and there the learned of all nations will be able to study the oldest monuments of the human race."

"Certainly; but the needles of Cleopatra, those trifles belonging to a woman, appear to me to be very unimportant, and to have no connection with the history of mankind," said the Lady Anna, quite carelessly.

"These are things of the greatest importance," replied the Bey. "Unfortunately there are but two such needles in existence, and one of these has been promised by the Pacha to England since 1820."

"And I shall take the other," said the fair petitioner, interrupting him.

"Perhaps the Pacha may wish to keep it in remembrance of the Egyptian queen."

"Such a remembrance would make a far better appearance in the hands of a woman."

"One of them has suffered from the rude touch of time, and the point is slightly damaged."

"I shall be quite satisfied with this one. I beseech you not to deny me this needle. I offer you a thousand pounds for it."

"A mussulman does not take money from a woman," said the governor, proudly. "In return for the needle, I ask only one favour. When you

shall have removed the needle, it is undoubtedly your own, provided always that the Pacha consents to the gift. If, however, you do not take it, I request that you grant me three evenings at my palace, during which I may make what compensation I can for your disappointment, at the same time that I provide for my own gratification by the enjoyment of your society. During these three evenings, also, you must officiate as lady patroness of my establishment."

The lovely petitioner bethought herself for a moment with regard to this extraordinary demand, and believing that under any circumstances she should certainly carry off a needle, and that the penalty was not of a very terrible nature, she thought she perceived in it only one of the inexplicable peculiarities of the East, a nameless caprice of the Turkish imagination, and replied without delay or alarm—

"Where is this needle of Cleopatra? Show it me; and if I do not take it, I promise to remain for three evenings in your palace, and to do the honours in true European style."

"Agreed," said the Bey. "Let us proceed, and I will show you the needles."

They mounted their horses, and took the direction of the second rampart of the outworks of Alexandria, toward the southeast, near the sea-shore. Runners went before them, as if to scatter the multitude, who notwithstanding had not molested our travellers in this solitude; their retinue consisted of a few *mamelukes*. The English lady thought that her turbaned cicerone was conducting her to some old palace in the vicinity of the city, where the precious needles were carefully preserved. This delusion increased the astonishment she afterwards felt.

After a ride of ten minutes between little hills of piled up rubbish, huts of Fellahs, and barking dogs, the little cavalcade came to a spot where the wall of fortification forms an angle for the protection of the sea-shore with another wall, which in many places had fallen in apparently from the weight of the superincumbent earth. Through this parapet, which is pierced with a row of loop-holes, might be seen the magnificent azure carpet of the Mediterranean, which at the horizon is blended with the bright milky blue of the arched heavens. Without seeing them, the waves are heard, whose monotonous roar dies away upon the level shore beneath the wall.

Suddenly, the governor stopped his horse, and turning to Lady Anna, said—

"Behold!"

They were standing at the foot of an obelisk of red granite, resembling that lately erected at the "Place de la Concorde" in Paris, except that it rises from the earth like a tree from the field or a mast from the deck of a vessel, without any base or pedestal, for in Egypt all obelisks are raised in this manner. A second, which appeared to be its twin brother, lay upon the ground athwart the first, and was half buried in the sand. Round about

grew a few marine plants; green lizards wandered here and there, and rested upon the gigantic pile, or walked leisurely over the portion stretched upon the ground. The upper half of the obelisk still standing, was illuminated by the golden light of the sun, which began already to sink beneath the horizon. Upon the northern and western sides might be seen long ranges of distinctly marked hieroglyphics, which appeared as if fresh from the chisel of the sculptor, while upon the eastern and southern sides every trace of hieroglyphics had vanished, so that one might assert that a stratum of granite of the thickness of the carved figures had been removed from the entire height of the monolith.

"Behold!" repeated Mokaram-Bey, and pointed his finger towards the two obelisks.

Lady Anna looked first at the Bey and then at the objects pointed out to her with the utmost amazement. She measured with her eye the upright obelisk, observed it in silence, and after riding around for a moment, she sprang to the governor's side.

"These are magnificent monuments," said she. "Which of the Pharaohs erected them?"

"I do not know, Miladi," replied Mokaram-Bey, whose Turkish erudition did not extend to a knowledge of what men had performed before his time.

"How old are these obelisks?" again began Miladi, with a pleased aspect, making use of an eyeglass, attached by a gold chain to her neck.

"Believe me, I did not see them proceed from the hand of the artificer, and therefore know not their age. Apparently, however, they are older than we, and will still outlive us."

"How happens it that one lies upon the ground?"

"Not long ago your countrymen wished to transport it to the banks of the Thames, but as it appears they could not carry it away from the Egyptian shore, they left it lying there like a dead body. If you can remove it, it belongs to you; if not, you know the conditions agreed upon."

"What is it you say? I do not understand you."

"And yet it is very easy of comprehension. We have ridden here to see the needles of Cleopatra. These are they;—you wish to possess one of them; take which pleases you best."

"These Cleopatra's needles!" cried Lady Anna, with the deep indignation of one who feels herself the victim of deception.

"I swear by the Prophet, that these are Cleopatra's needles."

"You jest," said the English lady, while the forced smile seen when one begins to find one's self in the wrong, fled from her lips.

"Miladi," said the governor, with that calmness and repose of countenance which at once carries conviction to the mind, "Europeans may, perhaps, occasionally thus joke with ladies; but oriental nations, never. Confess that you cannot keep the terms of our contract, and I presume to hope that you will pass three agreeable evenings at my palace upon the banks of the canal."

And now Lady Anna demurred, and was not willing to believe herself in the wrong. It appeared to her terrible to receive instruction in archaeology from a Turk, and the more so, because through his innate good nature he had not attempted to confirm her in a mistake, which, indeed, he had not perceived. But the governor's retinue, and some Europeans who passed that way in order also to survey the two gigantic monoliths, concurred in assuring her that these were, beyond all doubt, Cleopatra's needles.

"This is truly vexatious," said Miladi, at last, laughing heartily over her mistake; "I perceive that I must indeed renounce all hope of adding these needles to my collection." Then turning to Mokaram-Bey, she said, "If you wish me to carry off one of these needles, you must give me the box in which the queen was accustomed to enclose them."

For three successive evenings, Mokaram-Bey's palace presented scenes of the most brilliant festivities. Many consuls were there, and the first nobility of Alexandria were invited. The anecdote of the English lady and the needles had become talked of, and all the world knew who was the heroine of the feast. The illumination of the gardens in the evening was enchanting. There was dancing beneath blooming acacias to the music of an Italian orchestra, which played the quadrilles and gallopadés of Musard. At midnight, a magnificent supper was served, at which were eaten many of Cleopatra's needles made of sugar. There was also a toast drank to the Queen of Egypt and Lady Anna F—. The English beauty wore upon the occasion a magnificent costume presented to her by the Bey, and carried it, instead of Cleopatra's needles, with her to London.

DAY DREAMS.

BY MRS. M. N. M. DONALD.

Who has not been a dweller in the land of dreams? Who has not sunk to sleep, after a day of toil, or care, or sorrow, and, while his body lay mute and motionless, gone far away on spirit-wings to that land of shadows? There he has exchanged darkness for light, tears for gladness, toil for repose; the loved and the lost have come back to him once more; old familiar faces, that were long ago laid in the dust, smile kindly upon him; the voices that were wont to greet his ear in childhood, come again with their gentle cadences—tones of unearthly music, snatches of some half-remembered melody,—these, and a thousand other fond imaginings, are his blessed portion in the wide expanse, the limitless extent of dream-land. But night, with her mantle of darkness, is departing; the timid moon has hidden herself behind the western hills; the stars have, one by one, extinguished their glimmering tapers; the rosy-fingered morn hath unbarred the eastern gates, and light is spreading itself far and wide over the heavens—man is again to return to his daily tasks.

The distant hum of revolving wheels is now heard at intervals; the cry of some solitary sweep-boy, or the hasty summons of an impatient milk-man, wakens the echoes of the quiet streets. By degrees, these sounds increase and deepen, till, presently, a straggling sunbeam peeps, with its golden eye, in at the half-opened window, as if to reprove the sleeper for his slothfulness. He turns uneasily on his pillow; the companions of his dreams fade away, or take for a moment some grotesque or unnatural shape; a rude hand of flesh and blood falls heavily upon his shoulder; a rough voice warns him of the lateness of the hour—dream-land departs in an instant, and he is once more an inhabitant of this nether world.

But there is another sort of dreaming, that comes over our senses in broad daylight, when the sun is riding in mid-heaven, and the world is all alive with the full tide of human life and activity; when we are surrounded by a multitude of people; when we are threading the mazes of a crowded thoroughfare; when we are busily engaged in our daily avocations; and so entirely are we abstracted, so wholly occupied with rearing airy castles, (I speak experimentally,) that we forget all that is about us, and are wandering in spirit over all parts of the habitable globe, while our feet are pressing the familiar pathways of our every day's resort.

From my earliest years, this day-dreaming or castle-building has been a very favourite employment of mine. What a host of goodly edifices have I reared and seen demolished before my very

eyes. How many of the wise, and great, and good, have been my companions during those mystic hours of musing; and how do I bless, from my heart, that magical spell, by which we may wander off from the tumult of this vexatious, working-day world, and breathe, for awhile, an atmosphere so much purer than our own. But to my story of day-dreaming—for, after all this preamble, you will expect an illustration of my meaning, and so—"ye who have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now."

It was a glorious morning in the month of June. There was not a cloud flecking the deep blue heavens, nor a breath too rude for the soft cheek of my lady rose, as she lay on her emerald couch, with the dew-gems glittering on her breast. The birds were in full chorus, and the insect tribes performing a thousand antics in the air; and, as I stood at the open window, and looked out upon the rich and varied landscape of hill and stream, and woodland, that stretched before me, and contrasted them with the close city streets which I had so recently left, I felt that I had never loved nature half so well as at that moment, and was just meditating a long ramble through the environs of my native village, when my good mother entered the apartment, and rather abruptly solicited my aid in preparing a pudding for dinner.

Her voice, one of the pleasantest in the world to her daughter's ear, now for the first time had something disagreeable in its tone—for I was wandering with nature, roaming in thought with all lovely and loveable things, and could feel no sympathy with the vulgar cravings of an animal life. Pudding! Who could think of pudding, when there were blooming flowers and singing birds, and purling brooks, and the free, pure air of heaven wooing us abroad. Nevertheless, the pudding *must* be made, and I turned reluctantly from the window and the glorious prospect, and received instinctively the key of the large pantry from mamma's extended hand.

"You will find the red spice-box on the second shelf, just by the sweetmeat jars," she said.

"Yes, ma'am," I answered, as I gave one more glance at the window.

"And the flour," continued mamma, "you will take from the barrel nearest the door."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And the sugar from the largest of those stone jars, on the right of the pickle-pots."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And the eggs—you'll mind the eggs, my dear—the last in the house, I believe, but they'll do;

and if you haven't quite enough, why, put in a little *sal eratus*."

"Yes, ma'am."

"That is all," said mamma; and I forthwith proceeded to the pantry, a room dimly lighted by a single small window, and filled with all manner of household commodities.

Mamma was a housekeeper of the old school. "A place for every thing, and every thing in its place," was her motto, and, accordingly, I found, as I had been told, the red spice-box on the second shelf, and the barrel of flour, and the stone jar of sugar close by the pickle-pots, and then I turned to look for the eggs. Now, the whereabouts of these very necessary ingredients, mamma had forgotten to designate; and, in this large, dark pantry, surrounded by all sorts of barrels, boxes, kegs, jars and dishes, I was at a loss to know where to look for them. I peeped first into a keg, and my olfactory nerves were saluted with the odour of pickled herring. Next, I passed my hand into the mouth of a stone jar, and drew it forth dripping with some unknown liquid. Next, I explored more cautiously the almost fathomless depths of a tall tin cannister, and was rewarded by a few grains of rice. I was just on the point of returning to mamma, when I espied, far above me, on the topmost shelf, an old-fashioned china pitcher, of exquisite beauty, an heirloom in the family, having been the property of all my grandmothers, and which I had not seen in a long time. In a moment, my foot was upon a candle box; the next step brought me to the head of a barrel, then came the first shelf, which I also mounted, and then, grasping the kindly offer of a projecting ledge, I stood suspended in the air, while, with my right hand, I brought down the object of my ascent. It was formed of the richest Dresden china, and, I verily believed, in my youthful days, that all Prussia did not contain its equal. Often had I heard its history; and now, as I gazed upon its painted flowers, I forgot my airy position, and was lost in a day-dream.

I was a little child once more, and I sat on my grandmamma's knee, with the pitcher before me on the smooth oaken table, (another relic of the past,) while she told me, in her kind and gentle accents, how this very pitcher had once been the property of a fair and lovely lady, many, *many* years before, longer than she could remember; and how this lovely Lady Grace—for such was her name—had pined away and died, just for the love

of a gallant knight, who had gone to the wars, and had been found dead on the battle-field; and how this pitcher had been given to one of our English ancestors by the dying lady, as a token of remembrance. I had often mourned over the sad fate of the Lady Grace—for her story was a favourite theme in the long winter evenings, and my kind relative willingly indulged me with its recital; and now, as I gazed upon her beautiful memento, it came again fresh to my memory, although I had not heard it in years. The Lady Grace had held that very pitcher; the polished handle, now within my grasp, had been pressed by her ivory fingers. I was no longer in the dark pantry, but in the very chamber of the old castle, where she had lived and died. I looked from the deep mullioned window, and the wide park, with its red deer bounding away beneath the noble elms and spreading oaks, stretched before me. I turned to the couch, with its massive drapery, and there lay the dying maiden. She gazed upon me with her soft, languid eyes, and I saw, beneath the folds of her snowy robe, the faint beatings of her broken heart. Her taper hand rested upon the dark damask, and the blue veins were visible through the transparent skin. She spoke to me, and her tones were low, and sad, and wild, like the music of that mysterious lyre, whose voice is only awakened by an invisible touch. I knelt beside her, and took the fair hand in mine. It was cold as marble, and, as I did so—

"The eggs," said mamma's voice, at the door; "you will find them—."

Wonderful transition! The ancient chamber, the dying girl, the English landscape, all vanished in an instant. I started, made one spring to the ground, and found myself *within* the barrel instead of beyond it, and my feet planted upon the very eggs I had been in quest of, and which, with true housewife's care, had been snugly laid away in the most unimaginable place. Nor was this all—the china pitcher, the family inheritance, which was to have been my own, lay shattered in a thousand pieces, having slipped from my hand as I descended. Poor mamma, with uplifted hands, and uttering most pathetic lamentations over her lost treasures, surveyed the scene of ruin, while I, overcome with shame and grief, clambered from my unpleasant position, dripping with the broken eggs, and wishing most heartily that I had never seen the china pitcher, or heard the unhappy history of the Lady Grace.

AN EMBROIDERED FACT.

REPORTED (WITH PERMISSION) BY MRS. MARY CLAYERS, AUTHORESS OF "A NEW HOME."

WHAT the phrenologists call "approbateness" is an excellent development, but we may have it too full. People born without it are intolerable—those who have a superabundance, pay dearly enough for being agreeable. They win, without conscious effort,—instinctively, as it were,—“golden opinions” from those with whom they associate; and too good a reputation is sometimes a severe tax in more ways than one. As with other luxuries, it costs a good deal to support it. One of our friends got rid of his, inadvertently. We have the story from himself, only adding some explanations of our own.

George Elliott had, from his childhood, been the model of all excellence among his own family. His parents had other children, and they all did very much as they pleased, not having set out with a character to support. They did not always please to prefer what was wisest; and then they were sure of a lecture, to which George's prudence and self-government afforded the text.

George must have been really a good fellow, for his brothers loved him in spite of his position; and as for his sisters, they thought no mortal man, and hardly even Thaddeus of Warsaw, approached him in excellence. He was, in truth, less spoiled by this general homage than was to be expected. The shape of his head was not improved by the cultivation of a faculty which shows itself in squaring out the head just on each side the crown; but his black hair hid the superfluity, and the ceaseless good humour that beamed from his eyes, joined to a fine ruddy complexion and white teeth, made him an Adonis in the eyes of all the young ladies of the neighbourhood. Not a house but was open to him—not a mamma but smiled upon him. He was already “well to do,” and such qualities as his promised constant bettering.

But here, again, George experienced the disadvantage of being too well liked. The invariable welcome which awaited him, the capital footing on which he stood with the mammas and papas, and the fear that whenever he should select a special partner, it would be at the expense of a large amount of friendship and attention, had kept him undecided until five-and-twenty; and, we fear, a little too well satisfied with himself to promise uncommonly well as a husband.

Among his perfections,—in his father's eyes, at least,—was a strict and energetic attention to matters of business. He was the factotum in every affair requiring peculiar skill and discretion. He travelled, he negotiated, he advised. Never was there an eldest son on whose indomitable prudence

a father could rely so completely. Was a hard thing to be said, George must say it—because George could say it without hurting any body's feelings. Was a slippery debtor to be approached, George was the messenger; and if it proved necessary to follow the “defaulter” to Texas, he never flinched, and has generally returned with man or money. We will not say that such trusts were always agreeable; indeed, we have already hinted that our friend sometimes found his reputation rather costly. But developments are fate, and his “approbateness” kept on growing.

Once upon a time, when affairs called George from home, he was about to pass the night in a village, about sixty-five miles from his father's residence. There was no one to visit, for he knew none but the gentleman with whom his business lay; and he strolled out after tea, as men will when they have nothing else to do, not exactly seeking adventure, but in a mood of mind to be well pleased with any thing that should occur, to help off the evening. He paced the bank of the noisy little “privilege” that turned the grist-mill, the carding machine and the trip hammer, which formed the wealth of the village, until the light had faded to that pleasant gray which we poetically call dusk; and he was about returning to the inn to read the newspaper over again, when a wild-looking girl, with a shawl over her head, accosted him.

“They want you, up yander,” she said, in a mumbling and embarrassed tone.

George's eyes followed the direction of the thick red finger, and rested upon a pretty cottage on the side of a hill, at no great distance.

“Who wants me? There must be some mistake.”

The girl stood perfectly still, staring straight forward.

“Who is it that wishes to see me?” repeated George. “Whom were you told to ask for?”

“You're the one,” said the messenger, confidently. “I've forgot the name.”

“Was it Elliott?” asked George.

“Yes,” said the messenger; “they want you right off.”

Musingly did George follow the girl up the hill-side, perfectly convinced of the impracticability of getting any thing more out of her, and tolerably certain that he could not be the person in requisition. Why did he go then? We have already said that he was born to oblige, and also that he found the Templeville hotel somewhat dull.

The clumsy-footed emissary turned into a little court, full of spring flowers, and passing through a

porch shaded to perfect darkness by climbing plants, opened a door on the right. The room thus disclosed was a pretty rural parlour, on the sofa of which lay a young girl in a white wrapper, with an elderly lady sitting by her side.

"Here he is," said the girl; "I've fetch'd 'um."

The young lady started—the elder screamed outright.

"Who is this?" said the more ancient, turning to the girl with an annihilating frown, and seeming entirely to forget that the young man *might* be innocent, and was therefore entitled to decent treatment.

"I perceive there has been some mistake, madam," began our discomfited incomparable.

"Mistake! Oh yes, I dare say!" muttered the guardian, with a most unbelieving air. Then turning to the stupid maid, she proceeded to scold her in an under tone, but with inconceivable rapidity and sharpness, while George stood most uneasily waiting the result. He felt inclined to disappear at once, but that course seemed liable to further misconstruction; and he was, moreover, rather attracted by the invalid, who, though embarrassed, lost not her ladylike self-possession.

"The girl is newly come to us, and quite ignorant," she said, in rather a deprecatory tone. "She was sent for our physician, and must have mistaken you——"

"Oh, very likely," interrupted the elder lady, who forgot to scold the maid as soon as the young lady ventured to speak to George. "Doctor Beasley, with his bald head and one eye, is exceedingly like this gentleman! Quite probable that Hetty mistook the one for the other!"

The air of incredulity with which this was said could not be mistaken; but the implication was one which it was impossible to notice under the circumstances; and George concluded that the only course left for him was to make his bow and leave his character behind him.

As he turned, with his hat in his hand, a letter fell from it to the floor, unobserved by him in his embarrassment. He had not cleared the porch, when the maid ran after him with it.

"Here, Mister, they say they don't want none of yer letters."

George looked in his hat, found he must have dropt a letter, and took it, though it was now too dark to examine it. Here was a new confirmation of the evident suspicions of the lady-dragon as to some designs upon her fair charge.

Is it singular that a conviction began to dawn upon his mind that the said charge must possess considerable attractions?

"Don't touch that thing upon the table," says grandmamma, to the little one who is quietly playing on the floor.

"No, grandma," says the youth, and immediately leaves his play to get up and walk round and round the table, trying to reach the prohibited article.

George, the prudent, slept little that night. The young lady's eyes and voice, the delicate and languid grace of her figure, as she lay extended in evident feebleness on the sofa, rather unhinged his philosophy; and he was, besides, not a little troubled by the recollection of the spiteful air of the duenna, and the probability that the error had cost the fair invalid some discomfort. Altogether, there was food for reverie; and a hasty, unrefreshing morning slumber, had not made amends for a wakeful night, when he was aroused by the breakfast bell.

Inquiries respecting the people of the cottage elicited only the interesting information, that there was "an oldish woman, and a young gal," which added little to George's knowledge. The innkeeper guessed they were "pretty likely folks," but couldn't say, as they had not been there long.

George went home, but said nothing of his adventure. He said he did not think it worth while. But he thought it worth while, two weeks afterwards, to travel the sixty-five miles which lay between his home and Templeville, just to try whether the landlord might not have discovered something beyond the interesting facts before ascertained as to the "young gal" and her duenna.

But the innkeeper had added nothing to his store of information on this point, except the conclusion that the people on the hill were "fore-handed folks," and that there was a man who came once in a while to see them and brought them lots of things.

"A man!" said George. "Ah yes," (very unconcernedly, of course;) "of what age—about?"

"Oh, he always comes in the evening, and is off again early in the morning. Their help guesses he's an uncle or something."

Not much enlightened, even yet, George adopted the desperate resolution of trying boldly for an acquaintance. He judged it absolutely necessary to inquire after the health of the invalid. So, writing a civil card of inquiry, he walked up to the pretty cottage, and, after reconnoitring a little, rapped at the door, and awaited the coming of the stupid maid, with a trepidation quite new to his quiet and well-assured frame of mind.

What was his dismay when the aunt herself, with a face of iron, opened the door.

George was completely at a loss for the moment. The card was in his hand, but he could not offer it to the lady, so he stammered out something of his wish to inquire after the health of the family, and to express his regret for the misunderstanding on the former occasion.

Rigid was the brow with which the careful dame heard this announcement, and wiry were the muscles which held the door half shut, as if defying a forty-young-man power of getting in without consent of the owner.

"We're all quite well, I thank you," she said, closing her lips as tightly as possible as soon as she had communicated the information.

George stood still, and the lady stood as still as

She looked at the distant hills, and he at the door which had once disclosed to him the reclining figure in white. At length, finding it in vain to attempt wearying the grim portress into an invitation to enter this enchanted castle, he turned off in despair, when the young lady came through the gate, as if just returning from a walk.

George darted towards her, but the elder lady scarce allowed time for a word.

"Come, Julia," she said, "it is quite time you came in."

The young lady looked at George with a scarce perceptible smile, and such a comical expression, that their acquaintance seemed ripened in a moment.

"I must say good morning," said she, in a rather low tone, but so decidedly, that George, perceiving any attempt for a longer interview to be hopeless, put his card into her hand and departed—not without a secret vow that he would yet baffle the duenna.

The sixty-five miles seemed rather long this time, and his father remarked upon the difficulties which he must have encountered, to account for a two days' absence, and such a worn-out air. Yet all this time George persuaded himself that it was not *worth while* to mention his new acquaintance. He, with his old head upon young shoulders,—pattern of nice young men!—to find himself interested in a chance acquaintance—to be suspected by an ancient lady of designs upon her niece, and what was worse, to be conscious of a strong desire to furnish some foundation for such suspicions! Oh, it was too much! Pattern people find it so hard to come down to a neighbourly level with common, erring mortals! George found it easier to learn to perform the Templeville trip in the space of twenty-four hours, although it was, in reality, pretty good work for twice that time. In truth, it began to be necessary for him to take Templeville in his way to any point of the compass; and, at last, chance, or some other power that favours the determined, gave him an unexpected advantage.

It was the elder lady's turn to be an invalid, and, while she was, perhaps, enjoying an interview with the veritable Dr. Beasley, his former unwitting representative espied the now blooming cheeks of the young lady among other roses in a pretty little arbour in the garden.

"The garden walls are high, and hard to climb," said Juliet once; and the pretty Julia, of our story, might have said much the same thing of the picket fence which separated her from her new friend. But George was on the other side of it before she could have had time to quote the line.

Could two young people, who met in this romantic sort of way, in these unromantic times,—and after many a momentary interview, cut short by the cares of a duenna too,—fail to find some very particular subjects of conversation? We ask the initiated, not pretending to be *au fait* in these matters. However this may be, it must have been that very visit that enlightened George Elliott as to the young lady's position.

She was the prospective heiress of a bachelor uncle, who, in consequence of a violent prejudice against matrimony, had vowed all practicable vengeance in case she ventured to engage herself before the mature age of twenty-five, full six years of which were yet to come. A very liberal provision, which this same odd uncle allowed to the elder lady, Mrs. Roberts, who was his sister only by marriage, was made dependent upon the same point.

Now, the natural consequence of all this was, first, an irresistible inclination on Julia's part to fall in love, just for the sake of seeing whether her uncle would keep his word; and, secondly, from the extreme prudence of the aunt, leading her to take up her residence in a region of clodhoppers, an inevitable proclivity of the damsel to fancy the very first tall, dark-eyed, personable youth who should come in her way. We are not sure that Julia told George all this. We give it merely as a comment of our own, by way of *avis au lecteur*.

The garden interview was prolonged until the ruddy-fingered serving-maid was sent to seek Miss Julia; and as George was, on that occasion, put behind a thicket of lilacs for the moment, we infer that a considerable degree of intimacy had by this time been established between the young people.

Peaches were like little green velvet buttons when George was first mistaken for Dr. Beasley, and before they were ripe, he had learned to think it a small matter to ride one hundred and thirty miles in twenty-four hours, for the sake of spending an hour or two in the cottage garden at Templeville, and occasionally getting a cup of tea from the unwilling fingers of Mrs. Roberts.

He had, in the mean time, become the object of much remark at home. He had always been fond of a good horse, and rather celebrated for his equestrian skill; but people began to call him a jockey now—so many fine animals did he purchase, and so many did he discard again after only one trial on the Templeville road. The difficulty of breaking the subject at home had become greater with every visit, and our mirror of prudence had nearly persuaded Julia that her uncle's fortune was of no sort of consequence, and a six year's probation quite out of the question, before he could resolve to tell his father that he was about to marry a penniless young lady and her not very agreeable aunt—Mrs. Roberts being, of course, to be taken (fasting) with her niece.

While the disclosure was yet to make, a letter came for Mr. George Elliott, postmarked "Templeville," and directed in a prodigious scrawl with a very fine pen—a young-lady-like attempt at disguise, which could not but draw attention at a country post-office, if any body could have suspected so prudent a youth of clandestine proceedings. This epistle, being opened, was found to contain only a few lines, most cautiously worded, to inform Mr. George Elliott that suspicions of treachery and fears of consequent calamity made a friend of his very miserable. Further specifications,

diplomatically urged, gave Mr. Elliott to understand that the uncle was expected, and that there was reason to suppose he had been induced to plan a sudden removal of the cottagers to a far distant and (of course) inaccessible part of the country.

The rising sun of the next morning saw Elliott "making tracks" for Templeville, most literally, for the fierce pace of his gallant steed indented itself upon the moist soil in a striking manner. He must reach there in the afternoon at all hazards; and, although he had more than once performed the same feat before, he was now so anxious lest some accident should cause delay, that he pushed on with unwonted vehemence. He had twice changed horses, and had passed through a small village about twenty miles from Templeville, when the people on the road noticed that he was closely pursued by two horsemen in fiery haste.

George rode like the wild huntsman, and his pursuers were nearly as well mounted. At every point they inquired how far the maker of those dashing tracks was in advance of them, and their breathless inquiries were always answered in such terms as induced them to hope their chase was nearly at an end. They spared neither whip nor spur, therefore; but their horses were not so well used to that rate of travel, and one of them gave out entirely just as they entered Templeville, with our tired hero full in sight.

George reached the tavern, and went, as was his wont, immediately to the stables, to see his horse cared for. He examined several stalls before he chose one, and was giving his directions to the ostler when he was rather roughly accosted by two persons, who took their places on either side of him, and began in very aggressive style asking him various questions. Our prudent friend was not, we regret to say, a member of the peace society; and he responded to these inquiries in a way which threatened difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge.

The crowd increased every moment. The whole town of Templeville seemed congregated in the stable-yard. "There he is!" "That's him!" "That's the chap!" "I'd know him for a thief, anywhere!" were the cheering exclamations that met Elliott's ear on every side.

Not to dwell unnecessarily on particulars, we may say at once that the elder of these gentlemen had been robbed of a pocket-book, containing a large sum of money, and that circumstances favoured the idea that the thief had taken the Templeville road. George's hard riding pointed him out as the delinquent; and his having gone into several stalls on his first arrival, led the bystanders to suppose he had been seeking for a place to secrete his booty.

We need not notice Elliott's indignant denials of the charge. The old gentleman took very little notice of them, indeed. He rather advised him (as a friend) to give up the pocket-book at once, without attempting to deceive a person of his astuteness. George, who was anxious beyond every thing to be

on his way to the cottage, and who, likewise, felt exceedingly unwilling to call upon his only acquaintance in the village, knowing that would be to insure a faithful report of the whole affair at home, offered to submit to a search, provided it might be performed in private and without unnecessary delay. To this, after some consultation, the old gentleman agreed; and the landlord, (who, by the way, disclaimed all knowledge of the accused, except that he had made a great many inquiries as to the people at the cottage,) was showing the way through the crowd to an inner room, when George encountered Mr. Henderson, the person to whom he was known.

All chance of escaping recognition was now at an end, and it became evident to George Elliott that, in addition to the loss of consideration by an imprudent marriage, he must expect a good deal of hard joking on the subject of hard riding. The gaping crowd, commenting audibly upon every point of his physiognomy and equipment, and agreeing, *nem. con.*, that he had state prison written upon his face if ever a fellow had, was nothing, compared with the keen sense of mortification which came with every thought of home. Julia's power, however, was irresistible; and George, perceiving that Mr. Henderson knew his accuser, requested an introduction, which was accordingly performed, to the great discomfiture of the old gentleman, who became unpleasantly sensible that his wild goose chase had led him a great way from his lost money, ruined a fine horse, and brought him into very unpleasant circumstances with a young gentleman, who, upon close examination, did not look half so much like a gallows-bird as he had supposed.

"Upon my word and honour, sir," said the old gentleman, wiping his forehead with an air of the greatest perplexity, "I am extremely sorry for this mistake. If I can make you any amends, this gentleman, Mr. Henderson, will answer for me, that I shall be happy to offer any atonement in my power."

George, of course, disclaimed any such wish, and, only anxious to see Julia, he shook hands with his accuser and hurried off.

Before he shut the door, the old gentleman stopped him. "Will you do me the favour to tell me, before we part, what possible inducement you could have for riding at such a pace?"

George laughed, said he was fond of fast riding, and disappeared.

* * * * *

Julia, in tears, and all the despair of nineteen, met George with the intelligence that her aunt, after appearing to favour them, must have played them false, and induced the uncle to insist upon an immediate change of residence.

"To-morrow morning," she said, "we are to leave here, for ever. My uncle has already arrived, and we should have set off this evening, but for the circumstance of his having been robbed on his way hither."

"Robbed?" said George.

"Yes. He is now in pursuit of the thief, and will not probably return before night."

As Julia said this, sobbing all the time as if her little heart would break, not for her uncle's loss, but her own woes, the door opened, and George's new acquaintance walked in.

"Hey-day, hey-day, here's a pretty affair! This is the nice youth that has persuaded you to throw away your bread and butter, is it?"

Then, coming nearer, and taking a better look at George, who had thrown off the India-rubber overcoat which western men are wont to wear when showers are probable, he burst into a hearty laugh as he recognized the object of his former suspicions.

"So it wasn't my pocket-book you wanted, sir?" said he.

"No, sir," said George, glad of so good an opening for his suit, "No, sir; it is your niece, without any pocket-book at all."

"Will you take her without?"

"With all my heart and soul!"

"In one year from this time I will not object, on those terms," said the old gentleman.

But he probably thought he owed some reparation for his hasty accusation, for, when the year was out, George got the niece and the pocket-book too; but he could never regain his reputation as the mirror of prudence. We have never heard, however, that this detracted materially from his happiness.

"AULD REEKIE."

BY THEO. LEDYARD CUYLER.

"Edina! Scotland's darling seat,
All hail thy palaces and towers!"

EDINBURGH is probably the most picturesque city in Europe. London is more vast and imposing. Paris, with its flash of courts and fountains, and boulevards, is infinitely more brilliant. St. Petersburg has more overgrown magnificence; but for commanding prospect, architectural beauty contrasted with primitive rudeness, and for an astonishing variety of new and beautiful views arising before you at every turn, Edinburgh is unrivalled. Take your seat on a bright summer eve upon Calton Hill, and as you look down upon the New town with its broad streets, stately buildings all of fresh cream-coloured stone, and its princely terraces making in very deed a "city of palaces," you no longer wonder at the idolatrous admiration into which a Scotchman "goes off" at the very sight of Auld Reekie. On the south side of this new town you have a deep valley filled with markets, and with the dwellings of the poor. Over this valley are thrown a number of broad stone bridges, carrying the passengers above the tops of the houses below, and revealing in the darkness of the night a shining firmament of lights *beneath*, as well as above him. Crossing these bridges, you are carried back at once five hundred years. All around you are the lofty, gloomy structures of the olden time, six, eight, and even ten stories in height, with their prison-like windows, bewildering flights of stairs, and frightful "closes" underneath, which in the slashing days of chivalry gleamed with armour and resounded with the clashing of spears. These were the garrisoned abodes of the Douglasses, the Randolphs, and the Murrays. Here dwelt the *Scottish Chiefs* of our childish reading, at the recital of whose bloody deeds we used to quake at noonday, and steal our eyes cautiously around in momentary expectation of some huge iron arm to be laid on our shoulder, or some trap door to open under our feet, and send forth its mailed warriors—

"All booted and spurred, and fit for a fight."

The romance of these grim old castles has all faded now. They are only nestling places for whole swarms of hucksters, law students, barbers, bootmakers, and small tradesmen in all sorts of wares. Each of them now accommodates a colony; so that one of the dwellers near the house-top might, in the course of his daily visit to the street below, "call in" at the rooms of his different fellow lodgers, and get his hair dressed, his boots mended, his gloves stitched, besides "laying in" a considerable library, a box of pills, and getting in addition a bit of *legal advice* in regard to the suit

for trespass between the flighty gentleman in the garret, and the lodger in the "eleventh pair back." There is no doubt a great saving of ground rent by this tower-of-Babel process, and blue sky "comes cheap;" but this is more than counterbalanced by the grievous uncomfotableness and inconvenience of such an elevated position.

From Calton Hill the great object of view in the direction of the old town is the world-known *Edinburgh Castle*, so famous in the annals of Scottish wars.

"There watching high the least alarms
The rough rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold veteran gray in arms,
And marked with many a seamy scar.

"The ponderous walls and massy bar
Grim rising o'er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing war
And oft repelled the invader's shock."

It consists of a series of irregular fortifications, and although before the invention of gunpowder it might be considered impregnable, it is now a place of more apparent than real strength. It can be approached only on the eastern side. The other three sides are very precipitous, some parts being *more than perpendicular*. It is three hundred and eighty-three feet in height, contains accommodation for 2,000 soldiers, and its armory affords space for 30,000 stand of arms. Facing the northeast is the Half Moon Battery, mounted with twelve. eighteen and twenty-four pounders, the only use of which, in these days of the "pruning hook" and the "ploughshare," is to fire salutes on occasions of public rejoicing. Upon this battery is the celebrated piece of artillery called *Mons Meg*, from being cast at Mons, in Flanders. It is large enough for a clever-sized lad to creep into, and carries a ball about the size of the ill-fated "peace maker's." It was employed at the siege of Norham, and afterwards burst in firing a salute to the Duke of York in 1682, since which time it has been bound together with iron hoops.

In 1296 the castle was taken by the English, and an attempt was made by Randolph, Earl of Moray, and thirty chosen men, to regain it. According to the interesting account in Heath's Annual, the enterprise was undertaken at midnight. By catching at crag after crag, and digging into the interstices of the rocks, they succeeded in mounting to a shelving table of the cliff, above which the ascent for ten or twelve feet was perpendicular. Here they lay down to recover breath, and could distinctly hear the tread of the sentinels

above. While in this state of painful suspense, a loud shout was heard, and a fragment of the rock was hurled down at the same instant; and as rushing from crag to crag it bounded over their heads, Randolph and his brave followers in their perilous, helpless situation, felt the damp of mortal terror gathering on their brows, and clung with a death gripe to the precipice. The adventurers paused, listening breathless;—no sound was heard but the sighing of the wind, and the measured tread of the sentinel who had resumed his walk. The incident proved to be but a singular coincidence; the shout of the sentinel and the missile he had rolled down were merely a boyish freak to amuse himself during his wearisome walk, and the party after recovering from their fatigue and sudden fright, laboured upwards towards the castle wall. It was at length reached;—they scaled it by means of their ladder, and leaping down among the astonished guards sounded the war-cry, and after a desperate struggle, captured the castle. The morning sun dawned upon them, and beheld the thistle flag of Scotland waving from the battlements.

The Scottish *regalia* are exhibited every day in the crown-room by a ticket from the Lord Provost. They consist of a crown of red velvet covered with jewels, a sceptre about eighteen inches in length, and a long two-edged sword used at the coronations. That crown once pressed the fair temples of poor Mary, and that sceptre was wielded by "the Bruce." For a great many years these valuable and cherished relics of Scottish independence were lost, and the national joy knew no bounds when they were discovered in an old oaken chest which was opened first by Sir Walter Scott and the officers of the city. Every day the little room is thronged. No nation is more purely *national* than the Scotch. To them there is no hero like their Bruce, no song writer like their Rabie Burns, and no romancer like the "Shirra" of Abbotsford. (And I don't know but they are more than half right.) A Scotchman loves his country without any reservation, any "saving clauses," and without the slightest conviction that any other land can produce such lofty hills, and such lovely lakes, such "honest men and bonnie lasses" as his own. This is an amusing trait, but a noble one. I love the man the more who loves his country more than all others. I would not endure the man even from the sea-beaten rocks of Shetland who did not love his own home more than the vales of Tuscany.

Turning backward, and carrying your eye along the old town, you come to the *Canongate* celebrated in the Waverley romances. Beyond this in the outskirts of the city stands the ancient Palace of Holyrood. This time-honoured abode of Scotch royalty is a fine building of quadrangular form, with a central court about one hundred feet square. Its front is flanked by double-pointed towers, which impart to it a quaint appearance when contrasted with the gaudy, upstart structures of modern growth, which seem to stare at it out of all their—windows, and wonder how it came there. This old palace was

fast going to decay, but in 1822 some improvements were made in the internal accommodations, and since that time it has undergone a thorough repair at the expense of the crown. It is full of relics, the most interesting of which is the bed of Mary, Queen of Scots, which that unfortunate princess occupied during her residence in the palace. It stands against the wall of a dark, gloomy apartment, whose oaken floors, rude stone walls and ragged tapestries, are enough to chill one's blood. The bed was of crimson velvet, but it is now ready to crumble into black dust. Near it is a double chair, embroidered by Queen Mary, and used by Darnley and herself on their marriage occasion. Adjoining this room is a still more crazy-looking one, which the queen occupied as a dressing-room. Her dressing-box is hardly fit to keep the roughest tools in, and the reflection of the steel mirror on the wall would not equal that of a *still pool*, such as our Indian belles once made their toilets over. In fact, the accommodations of the most humble servant girl of the nineteenth century are superior to those of the most elegant queen of the sixteenth! In a small closet adjoining the bed-room, the armour of Darnley is exhibited—a huge helmet which I could not stand under, broad iron plates for his breast half an inch in thickness, and finishing off with boots whose soles were two inches high. His spear was "like a weaver's beam." Such an immense weight would crush a modern soldier to the earth.

The little room in which Rizzio, the Italian favourite of the queen, was murdered, is an object of interest to visitors. A bit of ragged tapestry dangled against the wall, and swung back and forth as the wind drew up the winding stairs from the dungeons below. I pulled it aside, and thrusting my head into the dark passage, almost fancied that I could hear the tramp of Darnley and his ruffian accomplices coming up to do the bloody deed. A dark stain is on the floor, which the lassie who exhibits the apartment roundly asserts is the blood of the murdered man. It is a pleasant delusion, and a true antiquarian always believes the fictions of guides and cicerones—Shakspeare's chair, the wood of the true cross and all.

The largest apartment in the palace is the picture gallery, which extends one hundred and fifty feet. Upon the walls of this room are suspended the pictures of one hundred Scotch kings in a style of art truly barbarous. They appear to be mostly by the same hand, "painted either from imagination, or porters hired to sit for the purpose!" In the olden time many a scene of courtly gaiety has enlivened this gloomy hall. Here the manly form of Darnley led down the dance; here the dashing young Pretender received the loyal caresses of the flaxen-haired daughters of "auld Scotland," and here poor Mary lived her short, bright day of unrivalled beauty. Farewell to thee, old Holyrood!—the asylum of many a royal outcast who had not elsewhere a place to lay his head!

IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"WASN'T that young Sanford?" asked Mrs. Larkin of her husband, as the two stood at a window of their dwelling one Sunday afternoon, noticing the passers by. The individual she alluded to was a young man who had ridden gaily along on a spirited horse.

"Yes," was the reply.

"He rides past almost every Sunday afternoon, and often in company with Harriet Meadows. I thought it was him, but I wasn't certain. He is quite a dashing young fellow."

"He is dashing far beyond his ostensible means. I wonder at Millard for keeping him in his store. I would soon cast adrift any one of my clerks who kept a swift horse, and sported about with the gay extravagance that Sanford does. His salary does not, I am sure, meet half his expenses. I have heard some of my young men speak of his habits. They say money with him is no consideration. He spends it as freely as water."

"Strange that his employer does not see this!"

"It is. But Millard is too unsuspicious, and too ignorant of what is going on out of the narrow business circle. He is like a horse in a mill. He sees nothing outside of a certain limit. He gets up in the morning, dresses himself, goes to his store, and then devotes himself to business until dinner time. Then he goes home and dines. After this he comes back to his store and stays until night. His evenings are either spent in reading or dozing at home, or with a neighbour at checkers. On Sunday morning he goes to church, in the afternoon he sleeps to kill time, and in the evening retires at eight, unless a friend steps in, to sleep away the tedious hours. Of the habits of his clerks, when out of his store, he knows as little as the man in the moon."

"But some one ought to give him a hint."

"It would be a charity."

"Why don't you do it?"

"Me! Oh, it's none of my business. Let Millard look after his own affairs. I'm not going to get myself into trouble by meddling with things that don't concern me. It is his place to see into the habits of his clerks. If he neglects to do so, he deserves to be cheated by them."

"I don't know. It seems to me that it would be no more than right to give him a hint, and put him on his guard."

"It would be a good turn, no doubt. But I'm not going to do it. It's no affair of mine."

"I don't think he is fit company for Harriet Meadows," Mrs. Larkin said, after a pause.

"Nor I," returned her husband. "I should be

very sorry to see our Jane riding with him, or, indeed, associating with him in any way. Surely Harriet's father and mother cannot know that their daughter goes out with him almost every Sunday afternoon."

"Of course not. They are religious people, and would think it a sin for her to do so. I am surprised that Harriet should act in such direct violation of what she knows to be their real sentiments."

"Some one ought to give them a hint on the subject."

"I think so. If it were my child, I would take it as a great favour indeed."

"Yes, so would I. Suppose, Ellen, you drop a word in Mrs. Meadows's ear."

"Me!" with a look and tone of surprise. "Oh no, I never interfere in other people's business. Every one ought to look after his or her own concerns. I hate your meddlesome folks. I'll take good care that my child don't form such associations. Let every body else do the same. The fact is, parents are too careless about where their children go, and what kind of company they keep."

"That's very true. Still I think no harm could come of your just giving Mrs. Meadows a hint."

"Oh, no indeed! It's none of my business."

"Well, just as you like," returned Mr. Larkin, indifferently. "Let every one see that his stable-door is locked before the horse is stolen."

Mr. Millard, who was in the same line of business with Larkin, was just the plodding, unobservant, unsuspicious person that the latter had described him. Sanford was an intelligent clerk, and an active salesman. These were valuable qualities, and for these he was appreciated by his employer. As to what he did or where he went after business hours, Millard never thought. He, doubtless, on the supposition of the merchant, went into good company, and acted with the same prudence that had governed himself under similar circumstances. But in this he was mistaken. The young man's habits were bad, and his associates often of a vicious character. Bad habits and bad associates always involve the spending of money freely. This consequence naturally occurred in the case of Sanford. To supply his wants his salary soon proved insufficient. These wants were like the horse-leech, and cried continually—"give, give." They could not be put off. The first resource was that of borrowing, in anticipation of his quarterly receipt of salary, after his last payment was exhausted. It was not long before, under this system, his entire quarterly receipt had to be paid away to balance his borrowed money account, thus leaving him nothing to meet

his increasing wants for the next three months. By borrowing again from some friends immediately, and curtailing his expenses down to the range of his income, he was able to get along for two or three quarters. But, of course, he was always behindhand just the amount of three months' salary. At length, as new wants pressed upon him, he was tempted to exceed in his borrowed money account the sum received as his quarterly dues. This made it impossible for him to pay off, when he received his instalments of salary, the whole amount of borrowed money, and caused him to cast about for some new resource. In balancing the cash account one day,—he had charge of this,—he found that there was an error of one hundred dollars in favour of cash—that is, there were on hand one hundred dollars more than was called for by the account. He went over the account again and again, but could not discover the error. For more than an hour he examined the various entries and additions, with no better success. At last, however, a little to his disappointment, for he had already begun to think of quietly appropriating the surplus, he found the error to consist in the carriage of tens—four instead of five having been carried to the third or column of hundreds, on one of the pages of the cash book, thus making the amount called for in the book one hundred dollars less than the real sum on hand.

For some time after this discovery, Sanford sat at his desk in a state of abstraction and irresolution. He was vexed that the error had been found out, for he had already nearly made up his mind to keep the overplus and say nothing about it. He did not attempt to change the erroneous figure. Why should it not remain so?—he at length asked himself. If it had cost him so much time and labour to find it out, it was not probable that any one else would detect it. Indeed, no one but himself and Mr. Millard had any thing to do with the general cash account of the establishment, and he knew very well that the latter did not examine it with a very close scrutiny. Finally, pressing demands for money determined him to put the surplus into his pocket, at least for the present. He did so, and in that act let into his mind a flood of evil counsellors, whose arguments, enforced by his own cupidities, could at any time afterwards have sufficient control to guide him almost at will. With this sum of one hundred dollars, he paid off a portion of what he owed, and retained the rest to meet the demands that would be made upon him before the arrival of the next quarter day. It was a rule with Millard to pay his clerks only in quarterly instalments. No other payments were allowed them.

It was not long before a deliberate false entry was made, by which another hundred dollars passed into his pockets. With this increase of income came a freer expenditure. Hitherto he had been in the habit of riding out on Sundays on hired horses; but now he was inspired with a wish to own a horse himself. A beautiful animal just at this time came under his eye. It was offered at one

hundred and fifty dollars. The owner, knowing Sanford's fondness for a gay, fast-going horse, urged him to buy. The temptation was very strong. He looked at the animal again and again, rode him out, talked about him, until, finally, the desire to own him became almost irresistible. He had not twenty dollars, however, and it would be two months before his salary came due, which at any rate was all wanted for current expenses. The cash book was looked at for a week or ten days before he could make up his mind to pen another false entry. At last, however, he picked up the courage to do so. The horse was purchased, and for a few days the thought of possessing so noble an animal was very pleasant.

On the third day after this act of dishonesty, Mr. Millard, who had been looking over the cash book, discovered the erroneous figures.

"Look here, Sanford," he said, "you have made a mistake here. This figure should be nine instead of eight, and this five instead of four."

The young man's heart gave a quick throb, but he controlled himself by a strong effort.

"Where?" he asked, quickly, coming at once to the side of Mr. Millard, and looking over the cash-book.

"Here—just add up these two columns."

Sanford added them up, and then said—

"Yes, that's a fact. I'm glad you have found it out. The cash has been over about two hundred dollars for several days, and I have tried in vain to find where the error lay. Strange, after adding up these columns for some twenty times or more, I should have still been wrong in these figures. Let me strike a balance for you now, so that you can count the cash, and see that there is just this amount over."

This dispelled all suspicion from the mind of Millard, if any had found a place there.

"No," he said, "I haven't time now. I have no doubt of it being right. Make the corrections required."

And as he thus remarked, he turned away from the desk.

Sanford trembled from head to foot the moment his employer left him. He tried to make the corrections, but his hand shook so that he could not hold the pen. In a little while he mastered this agitation so far as to be externally composed. He then changed the erroneous figures. But this did not make the matter straight. The cash account now called for two hundred dollars more than the funds on hand would show. If these should be counted before he could make other false entries, he would be discovered and disgraced. And now that errors had been discovered, it was but natural to suppose that Mr. Millard would glance less casually at the account than he had been in the habit of doing. At last, he determined to erase a few pages back certain figures, and insert others in their places, and carry down from thence the error by a regular series of erasures and new entries. This he did so skilfully, that none but the eye of suspi-

cion could have detected it. It was some weeks before he again ventured to repeat these acts. When he did so, he permitted the surplus cash to remain in the drawer for eight or ten days, so that if a discovery happened to be made, the balance on hand would show that it was an error. But Mr. Millard thought no more about the matter, and the dishonest clerk was permitted to prosecute his base conduct undetected. In this way month after month passed away, until the defalcation rose to over a thousand dollars. Nightly Sanford attended places of public amusement, usually accompanied by a young lady, the daughter of some respectable citizen, who knew as little of the habits and character of the young man as did his employer himself. Among those with whom he had become intimate was Harriet Meadows, the daughter of a merchant possessing a high sense of honour and considerable wealth. Mr. Meadows, so soon as the young man began to visit at his house, gave him to understand by his manner that he was not welcome. This was so plainly done that there was no room for mistake in the matter. Piqued at this, Sanford determined that he would keep the daughter's company in spite of her crusty old father. Harriet was gay and thoughtless, and had been flattered by the attentions of Sanford. She met him a few times after his repulse at balls, and hesitated not to dance with him. These meetings afforded full opportunity for the young man to push himself still further into her good opinion, and to prevail upon her at length to meet him clandestinely, which she frequently did on Sunday afternoons, when, as has been already seen, she would ride out in his company. This kind of intimacy soon led to a declaration of love on the part of Sanford, which was fully responded to by the foolish girl. The former had much, he thought, to hope for in a union with Miss Meadows. Her father was well off and in a very excellent business. His fortune would be made if he could rise to the position of his son-in-law. He did not hope to do this by a fair and open offer for Harriet's hand. The character of Meadows, which was decided, precluded all hope of gaining his consent after he had once frowned upon his approaches. The only course on the road to success was a secret marriage, and to that he was gradually inclining the mind of the daughter at the time our story opened.

It is not always that a villain remains such alone. He generally, by a kind of intuition, perceives who are like him in interiors, and he associates with these on the principle that birds of a feather flock together. He was particularly intimate with one of Larkin's clerks, a young man named Hatfield, who had no higher views of life than himself, and was governed by no sounder principles. Hatfield found it necessary to be more guarded than Sanford, from the fact that his employer was gifted with much closer observation than was Millard. He, too, rode a fast trotting horse on Sundays, but he knew pretty well the round taken by Larkin on that day, and the hours when he attended church,

and was very careful never to meet him. At some place of public resort, a few miles from the city, he would join Sanford, and together they would spend the afternoon.

On Jane Larkin, his employer's only daughter, Hatfield had for some time looked with a favourable eye. But he felt very certain that neither her father nor mother would favour his addresses. Occasionally, with her parents' knowledge, he would attend her to places of public amusement. But both himself and the young lady saw that even this was not a thing that fully met their approbation. Hatfield would, on such occasions, ingeniously allude to this fact, and thus gather from Jane how she regarded their coldness. It was not agreeable to her he quickly perceived. This encouraged him to push matters further. Soon the two understood each other fully, and soon after the tacit opposition of the parents to their intimacy was a matter of conversation between them, whenever they could get an opportunity of talking together without awaking suspicion.

Harriet Meadows and Jane Larkin were particular friends, and soon became confidants. They were both quite young, and, we need not say, weak and thoughtless. Sanford and Hatfield, as the reader has seen, were also intimate. In a short time after the latter had made up their minds to secure the hands of these two young ladies, if possible, there was a mutual confession of the fact. This was followed by the putting of their heads together for the contrivance of such plans as would best lead to the effectuation of the end each had proposed to himself. It is a curious fact, that on the very Sunday afternoon on which we have seen Mr. and Mrs. Larkin conversing about the danger and impropriety of Harriet Meadows keeping company with a man like Sanford, their own daughter was actually riding out with Hatfield. In this ride they passed the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Meadows, who, in turn, commented upon the fact with some severity of censure towards Mr. Larkin and his wife for not looking more carefully after their only child.

"They certainly cannot know it," finally remarked Mr. Meadows.

"No, I should think not. It would be a real charity for some one just to mention it to them."

"It certainly would."

"Suppose you speak to Mr. Larkin about it," Mrs. Meadows said.

"Me? Oh no!" was the reply. "It is none of my business. I never meddle in family affairs. It is their duty to look after their daughter. If they don't, and she rides about with Tom, Dick and Harry on Sundays, they have no one to blame but themselves for the consequences."

Thus their responsibility in the affair was dismissed. It was no business of theirs.

In the mean time the two clerks were laying their plans for carrying off the young ladies, and marrying them secretly.

"Have you sounded Jane on this subject?" asked

Sanford of his friend one evening, when the matter had come up for serious discussion.

"I have."

"How does she stand?"

"I think there is no doubt of her. But how is Harriet?"

"All right. That point we settled last night. She is ready to go at any time that Jane is willing to take a similar step. She would rather not go all alone."

"If she will only second me in urging the absolute necessity of the thing upon Jane, there can be no doubt of the result. And she will do that of course."

"Oh yes—all her influence can be calculated upon. But how do you think Larkin will stand affected after all is over?"

"It's hard to tell. At first he will be as mad as a March hare. But Jane's his only child, and he loves her too well to cast her off. All will settle down quietly after a few weeks' ebullition, and I shall be as cosily fixed in the family as I could wish. After that my fortune is made. Larkin is worth, to my certain knowledge, fifty or sixty thousand dollars, every cent of which will in the end come into my hands. And, besides, Larkin's son-in-law will have to be set up in business. Give me a fair chance, and I'll turn a bright penny for myself."

"How are you off for funds at this present time?"

"Low, very low. The old fellow don't pay me half a salary. I'm in debt three or four hundred dollars, and dunned almost to death whenever I am in the way of duns. All the people I owe know better than to send their bills to the store, for if they were to do so, and by thus exposing me cause me to lose my situation, they are well aware that they might have to whistle for their money."

"Can't you make a raise some how? We must both have money to carry out this matter. In the first place, we must go off a hundred or two miles and spend a week. After we return, we may have to board for weeks at pretty high charges before a reconciliation can be brought about. During this time you will be out of a situation, for old Larkin won't take you back into the store until the matter is made up. You ought to have at least a couple of hundred dollars."

"And I haven't got twenty."

"Bad, very bad. But don't you think you could borrow a couple of hundred from Larkin, and pay him back after you become his son-in-law?"

"Borrow from Larkin! Goodness! He'd clear me out in less than no time if I were to ask him to loan me even fifty dollars."

"No, but you don't understand me," Sanford said, after a thoughtful pause. "Can't you borrow it without his knowledge, I mean? No harm meant of course. You intend borrowing his daughter, you know, for a little while, until he consents to give her to you."

Hatfield looked into the face of his tempter with a bewildered air for some moments. He did not yet fully comprehend his drift.

"How am I to borrow without his knowing it? Figure me that out if you please," he said.

"Who keeps the cash?"

"I do."

"Ah! So far so good. You keep the cash. Very well. Now isn't it within the bounds of possibility for you to possess yourself of a couple of hundred dollars in such a way that the deficit need not appear. If you can, it will be the easiest thing in the world, after you come back, and get the handling of a little more money in your own right than has heretofore been the case, to return the little loan."

"But suppose it possible for me thus to get possession of two hundred dollars, and suppose I do not get back again safely after our adventure, and do not have the handling of more money in my own right—what then?"

"You'll only be supporting his daughter out of his own money—that is all."

"Humph! Quite a casuist."

"But isn't there reason in it?"

"I don't know. I'm not exactly in the state to see reasons clearly just now."

"You can see the necessity of having a couple of hundred dollars, I suppose?"

"Oh yes—as clear as mud."

"You must have that sum at least, or to proceed will be the height of folly."

"I can see that too."

"It is owing to Larkin's mean pride that you are driven to this extremity. He ought to pay for it."

"But how am I to get hold of two hundred dollars? That's the question."

"Is there ordinarily much cash on hand?"

"Yes. We deposit some days as high as ten thousand dollars; particularly at this season, when a good many merchants are in."

"The chance is fair enough. Two hundred won't be missed."

"No, not until the cash is settled, and then it will come to light."

"That doesn't follow."

"I think it does."

"You may prevent it."

"How?"

"Miss a couple of tens in your additions on the debit side of the cash book. Do you understand?"

"Not clearly."

"You are dull. Change a figure in footing up your cash book, so that it will balance, notwithstanding a deficit of two hundred dollars. After you come back, this can be set right again. No one will think of adding up the back columns to see if there is any fraud."

After Sanford ceased speaking, his friend cast his eyes to the floor, and reflected for some time. There was in his mind a powerful struggle between right and wrong. When the plan was first presented, he felt an inward shrinking from it. It involved an act of fraud, that, if found out, would blast his character. But the longer he reflected, and the

more fully he looked in the face the fact that without money he could not proceed to the consummation of his wishes, the more favourable the plan seemed.

"But," he said, lifting his eyes and drawing a long breath, "if it should be found out?"

"Larkin will not expose his son-in-law for his daughter's sake."

"True—there is something there to hope for. Well, I will think of it. I must have two hundred dollars from some source."

And he did think of it to evil purpose. He found no very great difficulty in getting Jane to consent to run away with him, especially as her particular friend, Harriet Meadows, was to accompany her on a like mad-cap expedition with Sanford.

Nothing occurred to prevent the acts proposed. By false entries, Hatfield was enabled to abstract two hundred dollars in a way that promised a perfect concealment of the fraud, although in doing it he felt much reluctance and many compunctions of conscience. But it seemed his only resource, and he adopted it, instead of reflecting that any act must be of necessity wrong that cannot be done without involving a deed of dishonesty.

About ten days after the conversation between the young men, just given, Jane Larkin obtained her mother's consent to spend a few days with a cousin who resided some miles from the city on a road along which one of the omnibus lines passed. Harriet Meadows did not use this precaution to elude suspicion. She left her father's house at the time agreed upon, and joined young Sanford at an appointed place, where a carriage was waiting, into which Hatfield and Jane had already entered. The two couples then proceeded to the house of an alderman, who united them in marriage bonds. From thence they drove to a railroad depot, took passage for a neighbouring city, and were soon gliding away, a suspicion unawakened in the minds of the young ladies' friends.

The absence of Harriet on the night following alarmed the fears and awakened the suspicions of her father and mother. Early on the next day, Mr. Meadows learned that his daughter had been seen entering the —— cars in company with young Sanford. Calling upon Millard, he ascertained that Sanford had not been to the store on the previous day, and was still absent. To merge suspicion and doubt into certainty, the alderman who had married the couples was met accidentally. He testified to the fact of his having united them. Sick at heart, Mr. Meadows returned home to communicate the sad intelligence to the mother of Harriet. When he again went out, he was met by the startling rumour that a defalcation had been discovered on the part of young Sanford to a large amount. Hurrying to the store of Millard, he was shocked to find that the rumour was but, alas! too true. Already false entries in the cash book had been discovered to the amount of at least five thousand dollars. An officer, he also learned, had been despatched to ——, for the purpose of arresting

the dishonest clerk and bringing him back to justice.

"Quite an affair this," remarked Larkin to an acquaintance whom he met some time during the day, in a half serious, half indifferent tone.

"About Meadows' daughter and Sanford? Yes, and rather a melancholy affair. The worst part of it is, that the foolish young man has been embezzling the money of his employer."

"Yes, that is very bad. But Millard might have known that Sanford could not dash about and spend money as he did upon his salary alone."

"I don't suppose he knew any thing about his habits. He is an unsuspicious man, and keeps himself quietly at home when not in his store."

"Well, I did then. I saw exactly how he was going on, and could have told him; but it wasn't any of my business."

"I don't care so much for Millard or his clerk as I do for the foolish girl and her parents. Her happiness is gone and theirs with it."

"Ah, yes—that is the worst part. But they might have known that something of the kind would take place. They were together a good deal, and were frequently to be seen riding out on Sunday afternoons."

"This was not with the knowledge of her parents, I am sure."

"I don't suppose it was. Still, they should have looked more carefully after their child. I knew it, and could have told them how things were going—but it wasn't any of my business. I always keep myself clear from these matters."

Just at this moment a third person came up. He looked serious.

"Mr. Larkin," he said, "I have just heard that your daughter and Hatfield, your clerk, were married at the same time that Sanford was, and went off with that young man and his bride. Alderman ——, it is said, united them."

Larkin turned instantly pale. Hatfield had been away since the morning of the day before, and his daughter was not at home, having asked the privilege of going to see a cousin who resided a few miles from the city. A call upon Alderman —— confirmed the afflicting intelligence. The father returned home to communicate the news to his wife, on whom it fell with such a shock that she became quite ill, though only temporarily so.

"He might have known that something of this kind would have happened," remarked the person who had communicated the intelligence, as soon as Larkin had left. "No man who doesn't wish his daughters to marry his clerks, ought to let them go to balls and concerts together, and ride out when they please on Sunday afternoons."

"Did Larkin permit this with Jane and Hatfield?"

"They were often thus together whether he permitted or not."

"He couldn't have known it."

"Perhaps not. I could have given him a hint on the subject, if I had chosen—but it was none of my business."

On the next day all the parties came home—Sanford compulsorily, in the hands of an officer; Hatfield voluntarily, and in terrible alarm. The two brides were of course included. Sanford soon after left the city and has not since been heard of. His crime was “breach of trust!” As for Hatfield, he was received on the principle that, in such matters, the least said the soonest mended. In the course of a few months he was able to restore

the two hundred dollars he had abstracted. After this was done he felt easier in mind. He did not, however, make the foolish creature he had married, happy. Externally, or to the world, they seem united, but internally they are not conjoined. Too plainly is this apparent to the father and mother, who have many a heartache for their dearly loved child.

LEAP YEAR; OR, WOMAN'S PRIVILEGE.

BY WILLIAM E. BURTON.

"AND if aunt Milly is 'courting the men,' to repeat your inelegant phrase, Miss Bella, she is but using the immunities of the season; for the present year is Leap Year, when unmarried ladies are privileged to pop the question to tardy swains and undeclared admirers."

"Leap year, mamma?" said the pretty maiden, while a conscious blush attested the interesting nature of her parent's remarks.

"Yes, miss," said Mrs. Grainger, good-humouredly; "and let me advise you and your sisters to exercise a portion of your sex's privilege sufficient to insure husbands before the year expires. Your papa finds business getting worse every day, and I am tired of having a crowd of single girls filling up the table when there are so many young bachelors looking out for eligible wives."

"Mamma, mamma, the men will not marry in these hard times. Mr. Billy Semple told me last week at the Spraggses' party, that money was so scarce he could not afford to pay even his addresses."

"Billy Semple, indeed!—a young beginner without capital! His own family proves the falsity of his assertion, for his four ugly red-headed sisters are all settled in life, and in tolerably advantageous positions, too, considering the times."

"But, mamma, that was before the 'pressure,' and consider how industriously Billy Semple worked to get husbands for his sisters. Every available young man in the city was invited to the house to hear 'Stalia sing and play, or to read Cely's poetry,—though no one believes she wrote it,—or to examine Mary's geological specimens, and Tilly's cases of bugs and butterflies. And the old gentleman, too, brought home every single southern or western merchant that entered the store; and Billy always had play and concert tickets for the whole party;—and the young men who were seriously inclined were asked every Sunday evening to hear sacred music by the young ladies, assisted by the three blind men from the asylum. And then, how the mother talked about her darlings!—the vocabulary of goodness was daily exhausted in their praise! It was impossible to keep single in that family. All the girls married before they were eighteen; and when a squinting cousin came on a visit from Salem, the old folks, to keep their hands in, patched up a marriage between her and the doctor who operated on her for strabismus."

"Miss Bella, you give your tongue too great a license. The Semples are worldly people, and have sacrificed their children at the shrine of interest. I should be happy to have my daughters

settled in life, but would rather see them die old maids than match unhappily."

"Mamma, it is not fair to joke us girls about being single, when we have no chance given us to pick up a decent beau. We have no brother Billy to work for us. Papa invites no one to the house but forbidden clerks, quakers and gray heads. There are no balls given now-a-days; the theatre is unfashionable; and parties are so few and far between that a flirtation is frozen to death before the next meeting smiles upon us."

"Your sister Maria married a respectable man, without having recourse to any of the Semple adjuncts."

"Now, mamma, *was* poor, dear consumptive George a husband worth having? Didn't he die seven weeks after the ceremony, and his widow came back to her father's house before half her acquaintances knew that she had quitted it."

"Take care, my pretty miss, that the widow is not married a second time before her unattractive sisters receive the first proposal," said the mother, jokingly, as she quitted the room.

"Unattractive!" murmured Bella; and the pouting beauty ran to the mirror, and arranged her glossy ringlets with her taper fingers as she gazed on the reflection of her charms. The contemplation seemed satisfactory. "Unattractive! Mamma could not mean that for me!" and the pleased maiden sat down to cogitate on the conversation with her parent.

In a few minutes, Bella had resolved upon her course; and running up stairs to her sister's room, summoned her, with the widow and a spinster aunt who resided in the family, to a council of deliberation.

Bella detailed the offensive portion of Mrs. Grainger's remarks, and enlarged with virtuous indignation on the unjust nature of the maternal sneer at their single blessedness, when nothing was done to help them to a change of condition. She repeated the arguments which she had advanced to her mamma; joined regrets with the spinster aunt at their constrained absence from Saratoga for the two last seasons; agreed with her sister Charlotte that there was positively "nobody" at the seashore last year; alluded pathetically to her papa's tyranny in snubbing off a whey-faced light-haired medical student, who carried a thick stick past the house for six weeks, staring with lack-lustre eyes at the windows, and chewing sweet cavendish with a perseverance peculiar to the contiguity of Mason and Dixon's line; and, finally, complimented the young widow on her escape from the shame of

celibacy, and her likelihood of lighting Hymen's altar with a double torch ere she, Bella, had extinguished the vestal fire.

Leap Year and its privileges were then mentioned by the young lady, who ironically declared her intention to avail herself of her sex's rights. She was not to be reproached for being "unattractive,"—she would take her mamma at the word, and pop the question to any available beau who had the hardihood to venture in her propinquity. Miss Charlotte made common cause with Bella, and joined her in her declarations. Aunt Milly, as Miss Matilda Mildred was generally termed, who owned to eight and twenty, and had done so for the last four years, applauded the girls' resolve; and, praising the usages of the Bissextile, proclaimed her readiness to aid and assist all proper plans and plots, although the ardent appeals of a certain male friend would render unnecessary her availability of the principle so necessary to the welfare of the sex. The widow promised her assistance, slyly hinting that it was worth while seeing if she could not keep her vantage in this Atalanta race. In short, the four ladies entered into a bond of alliance, with one common purpose and intent—marriage to all the parties before the expiration of the present year.

The reader must not expect a detail of the various and minute stratagems practised by the beligerents in this holy war against single blessedness. It would be placing fresh weapons in the hands of those who are already too powerful, and too well acquainted with the acts of subjugation. The ladies succeeded in their object, of course, as ladies always do when they are resolved to gain a point, and can back their resolution with the united services of youth and beauty; but Dan Cupid did not relish being dragooned into obedience—he preserved the immaculate nature of his divinity; and, despite of feminine plots and plans, he proved the potency of his sway ere he suffered his saffron-robed friend, Hymen, to control the destinies of his disciples.

The details of a confidential dish of chat at an accidental tea-drinking at Mrs. Spraggs', about three months after the formation of the conspiracy, will save the reader some considerable length of explanation.

"You must come and see us," said Mrs. Grainger to the lady of the house. "Come without ceremony or particular invitation. It is but a step, you know, and Spraggs can look in for you in the evening, and take supper with us and a glass with the gentlemen."

"You have company now nearly every evening in the week, I believe?"

"Every evening. Since Mr. Grainger found it necessary to increase the firm, in consequence of the extensive nature of his western contracts, Mr. Singleton, the new partner has been almost entirely at our house. He is a bachelor, and dislikes living at the hotels. His brother, from Kentucky, is now in this city, and spends most of his time with our

family. Mr. Grainger's uncle, Mr. Cremorne, is also with us."

"We shall have the young ladies getting married soon, I presume. I have frequently observed them attended home by two handsome young men with elegant moustaches."

"New Yorkers, but wholly ineligible. Mr. Grainger gave them their dismissal last week. Uncle Cremorne overheard them tossing up for first choice of the girls, and the winner of the largest fortune was to pay the expenses of the wedding dinner."

"The reprobates!" sighed Mrs. Spraggs. "And Count Rooster-catcher, from Molly—something,—who saw Miss Charlotte at Baltimore, and followed her home?"

"Roosti-käächer, from Moldavia. Oh, my dear madam, foreign counts are so direfully below par, now-a-days, that Mr. Grainger considered it degrading to have him seen about the premises. Uncle Cremorne thinks he recollects Roosti-käächer as a barber at New Orleans."

"Only to think," said the astounded Spraggs. "But Miss Bella seems partial to that young midshipman who——"

"My dear Mrs. Spraggs," said the mamma, who perceived that her neighbour had made good use of her parlour windows, "you must not suppose that every flirtation is bound to end in marriage, or that girls, possessing the advantages which grace the Misses Graingers, are compelled to accept every young fellow who offers them his attentions. Mr. Frederic Murray is of good family, and wears the U. S. button; but he is nobody, positively nobody at all. He has never figured in a duel; and uncle Cremorne tells us that a midshipman now-a-days is considered a mere nonentity till he has faced his man at eight paces, and shot a friend or two."

"Goodness! why, you don't?" said the simple Spraggs. "I thought the navy people were to fight the enemy, not one another. Well, I never——"

It will be perceived, that although the fair conspirators had, from fortuitous circumstances, been surrounded with beaux, not one of them had accepted an offer, a clear proof that they did not consider their spinster-doom a certainty. By the terms of their compact, they were to aid and assist each other in their designs, but the natural selfishness of love, and the cross purposes inseparable from the individuality of their schemes, rendered nugatory that part of their compact; and each lady forthwith essayed her share of the project "on her own hook,"—a trite but expressive idiom in the present case, where each fair angler believed in the potency of her bait, and congratulated herself on catching a tolerable share of dangles.

Mr. Cremorne, or uncle, as he was termed by the whole family, was related to the Graingers by some marriage connection of so remote a nature that neither party had been able to trace the propinquity. He was, therefore, perfectly "eligible" in a consanguineous degree, as a suitor, for the hand of any one of the ladies, and defied the denun-

citations which the sectarians had recently promulgated against family unions to the extremest verge of fancied relationship. He was a starch, unbending bachelor of fifty, with a supreme contempt for the opinions of every other human being, and a veneration for the habits and manners of the days of his childhood. He cherished a semi-queue of doubtful length, half hidden by the high collar of his old-fashioned coat. He pertinaciously persisted in wearing *subligaculi* that buttoned at the knee, and allowed an exhibition of his stalwart calf in a clean white stocking. He truly believed that the worst effect of the French Revolution was the *sans culotte* invention of trowsers. His point of admiration in the fine arts was Trumbull's enormous leg piece; he gloated over this pedicular portraiture with an enthusiasm "that knew no ebb, but kept due on." He valued not as he ought the patriotic devotedness of the act performed by the assembled wisdom of the land;—he pointed to the calves depicted by the painter as a proof of the manliness of the race, and sighed to think that he had been born too late to thrust his sinevy extremities amongst the seventy-two legs belonging to that august body.

Uncle Cremorne had quitted his rural solitude with a determination to end his bachelor miseries in the arms of the first "eligible" maiden he encountered among his civic acquaintances. The sparkling eyes of Bella Grainger seriously affected the old man's midriff, and he trotted after her for several days with a devotion worthy a pet spaniel. The damsel was exercising her Leap-Year prerogative, and the fascinations vainly applied to an impenetrable beau drove the "blind-bow-boy's butt shaft" deep into the affections of Uncle Cremorne. Satisfied that she was pure in spirit as she was lovely in person, he resolved to pop the question; but, following the usages of the old school, he determined to obtain the father's consent before he consulted the affections of the maid. He sought his friend Grainger in his store on the wharf, believing that a private conversation could be more readily obtained in the counting-house of the merchant than in the much frequented parlours of the private residence. He arrived in the midst of the execution of a large order at a short notice. His preludizing remarks to the father were interrupted by the details of business; the charms of Bella were mixed with neats' tongues, pigs' faces, and mess beef; encomiums on the sweets of married life were drowned in sugar-house molasses; bags of indigo clouded his prospects of happiness; and just as he was about boldly to declare that he well knew the consequences of the step he was resolved to take, he was silenced by a junior clerk "telling off" a small invoice of horns, gunpowder, brimstone, and pickles.

"Mr. Grainger," said Stapleton, the new man, leaning over the desk and whispering to his principal, "Smivers wishes us to renew his note for twelve hundred, in our favour, due 27th proximo, for twenty per cent. down, and another note at three months for the balance, with interest."

"We must not do it, sir, without another name on the new note. Mr. Smivers is bound to fail—he has just married an extravagant flirt almost young enough to be his grandchild. The note must be met. He cannot ask us to pay for her frolics or his foolery."

Uncle Cremorne put on his hat and walked home.

"What is the matter with uncle, this morning?" said Mr. Grainger to himself. "I do believe that the old gentleman has been taking a glass or two of wine. He seems mightily pleased with Bella—perhaps he means to leave her his property."

Mr. Grainger was not singular in this opinion. The ladies favoured the idea, with the exception of Miss Mailda Mildred, who, with the sagacity of experience, guessed pretty accurately the old gentleman's feelings. This ancient lady, disappointed in her designs upon the more "eligible" of the Grainger acquaintances, resolutely set her cap at Uncle Cremorne, and for a time fondly hoped to achieve her share of the joint resolution relating to Leap Year. She ransacked the stock of every tobacconist in the city, till she discovered a supply of that variety of the weed which uncle loved to smoke. She presented him with a dozen pair of super extra fine white stockings with double heels and toes, for his peculiar wear. She requested him to teach her the mysteries of double dummy, which every one else had laughed to scorn. At last she considered her position sufficiently tenable. One evening, therefore, when the family were at the theatre, she mixed the bachelor a glass of hot toddy, and placed his long Dutch pipe on the table in the back parlour. In the hope of drawing forth an explanation, she bantered him respecting his attachment to her niece; and before the old gentleman recovered from this unexpected broadside, she threw a Paixhan shot plump into his magazine by declaring that a person of his age ought to select a woman of maturity for a wife, not a chit in her teens, unable to appreciate the value of the sacrifice he made.

The shot told fearfully, but the good ship Cremorne did not immediately explode, although the volume of smoke that escaped foretold that a blow up was inevitable. After an awful pause, for Aunt Milly was afraid to continue her fire, he placed his pipe on the table, and in a deep tone of voice, said—

"I understand you, Miss Mildred, and it is time that you should understand me. I am a plain man, and must speak as I feel. I see what you are driving at, but you are too old to become my wife."

"Old!" shrieked the horrified spinster, at this extraordinary specimen of plain speaking. "Old! Become *your* wife? What is the man thinking of! Old! Why you are ancient enough to be my father! Marry you? Old! Well, I'm sure."

"You were a grown girl when Grainger married your sister, and that is twenty-three years ago."

"An infant!—a child in a frock and a pink sash!" said the indignant lady.

"A full grown girl in a short-waisted spencer

and an Angoulême straw bonnet, as big as a modern coal scuttle," said Uncle Cremorne.

"Too young to be admitted to the wedding-party!" insisted the lady.

"You acted as bridesmaid. I was there, and remember that you complimented me on my appearance in a new pair of fashionable cream-coloured leather breeches."

"Mr. Cremorne, are you mad? Do you wish to insult me?"

"If age is an unpleasant subject, why did you broach it? I repeat it, madam, that you are too old, or I should be proud to meet your views. A man is in his prime at fifty—a woman at five and twenty, or, at the most, thirty; consequently I have barely climbed to the top of the hill, while you have passed over it, and are very considerably down the wrong side."

"Oh, you wretch!"

"Facts, madam, should never be disguised. I have seen many a young couple, of equal ages, boy and girl, 'made for each other,' as the wise-aces say, pair off in the spring of life. In twelve years or so,—and you and I, madam, both know how soon a dozen of years roll over our heads,—in twelve years or so, the boy has become a man, but the girl is an old woman—and what is the inevitable result? The husband becomes dissatisfied, curses his lot, and neglects her whom he has sworn to cherish until parted by death. Knowing all this, madam, I have refrained from marriage until I attained a sufficient age to warrant me in uniting myself to a partner who will grow old with me, and not before me. If I take up with you, my long bachelorship has been foolishly spent, for I might as well have had you when you wore the short spencer and the big bonnet—and I must confess that you were, *then*, a very pretty looking girl; but twenty-three years work fearful changes, you know."

The gentleman's compliment was as unsatisfactory as his argument. The offended spinster retired to her room, and Uncle Cremorne finished his pipe in silence.

Mr. Frederic Murray, the young midshipman, mentioned by the chatty Mrs. Spraggs, persevered in his attentions to the lively Bella, notwithstanding the hints of the papa and the rude bluntness of the uncle, who looked at him through spectacles of green and yellow hues. Whilst his extreme youth rendered him the fittest mate for Bella, this capricious beauty slighted him, and every other unmarried lady in the house courted his society. Aunt Milly, as if in obstinate opposition to Uncle Cremorne's doctrine, pretended to believe that he was not too young to make her an excellent husband. The widow bent the whole force of her artillery against the juvenile middy; and the sedate Charlotte did not hesitate to declare that she had no higher ambition than to be a captain's lady. But he remained true to his flag—Bella was the centre of his affections;—he dodged her steps, watched her glance, hung with rapt attention on her speech,

and exhibited such unequivocal signs of deep devotion, that Mrs. Spraggs was not the only person who supposed that the marriage of Bella and the sailor was a settled thing.

William Singleton, Mr. Grainger's new partner, was in every respect a gentleman and a ladies' man. Well made, with a pleasant, intelligent countenance, thoroughly educated, possessing a readiness and ease only to be obtained by worldly abrasion, and well versed in the accomplishments and habitudes of polite life, he commanded the good opinion of the sex, and materially added to the popularity of the Grainger parties. The Bissex-tile conclave, in accordance with a wish expressed by papa, had appropriated him to Charlotte, and the lady was not slow in hinting his attachment to the friends of the family, or in awarding encouragement to her share of his general civilities. Aunt Milly also smiled benignantly on the handsome merchant, and persisted on singing "She never blamed him, never," every musical evening, because he once praised the song in her presence. Robert Singleton, his brother, was a book-worm,—a philosopher—an unimpressible character. He was tolerably good-looking, younger than the merchant, and said to be rich; the widow essayed his heart, but study was his mistress, and the prerogative of Leap Year was felt to be a dead letter in his presence.

Matters remained in this position until the autumnal tints of the street foliage were mingled with the mud of a wintry gutter. But few weeks remained before the Christmas bells would toll the knell of the departed year, and the conspirators had not effected a single match. Bella flirted with all the beaux, yet seemed to give her energies to no decided point; the widow had her own especial views, and Charlotte stuck to her appropriation with a resolution that plainly said she meant to unite the firm of Grainger and Singleton by a nearer and a dearer tie. If a walk was proposed, she took William Singleton's arm, as if it was an understood matter; when he knocked at the door, she always anticipated the servant, and opened the portal with a gracious smile; she sat next him at dinner; sung only at his request; innocently coupled their names in conversation, and then blushed at her boldness;—in short, she proved herself an adept Bissextiler, and fervently relied on the ultimate success of her attentions.

The brothers were in conversation at the parlour window, just after breakfast, one morning, when, using a few words in a low tone of voice, William took the book from Robert's hand, for Robert was never without a volume, and glanced over its contents. Miss Charlotte glided to his side, and leaning playfully on his arm, inquired if it was the last new novel. Robert moved from the window, and William Singleton, taking Charlotte's hand, said, in an agitated voice—

"I wish to have half an hour's conversation with you to-day, on a very important subject. Oblige me by not joining your sisters in their morning's

promenade. May I look for you in the drawing-room about twelve o'clock? We shall not be interrupted then?"

Charlotte nodded assent—she was too excited to speak.

At the appointed hour, the gentleman entered the room, and found the lady reposing on a fauteuil in the most approved style of dishabille. She was pale and nervous. William Singleton, after a few prefatory and very encouraging "hems," commenced a series of murmurs in somewhat the following strain:

"—About to broach—tender nature—should I fail—poignant regret and endless misery."

A sob from Charlotte.

"Charming family—never so happy—united in trade—marry—union—bliss."

A squeeze of the hand from the gentleman, and an almost imperceptible response from the lady.

"A fortune beyond the control of trade—fiery passion—no other woman—earth made heaven—adoration—despair."

Strong symptoms of hysterics on the side of the lady. The gentleman raised his voice.

"Yes, dearest Charlotte, there is one man who loves you with a singleness of heart which must insure a life of joy. You have not been blind to his deep devotion—you have appreciated the intensity of his love, and will not suffer the weak vanity of your sex to trifle with the happiness of your adorer. Say, dearest girl, may he hope?"

The lady, with a convulsive throb, threw herself in his arms, and hid her blushing cheek amid the curling luxuriance of his sinister whisker.

"Dear, dear Charlotte! how happy this will make your almost despairing lover. Come in, Robert, come in, and receive your Charlotte from my hands."

And Robert Singleton, the pale, bashful book-worm, rushed into the apartment, and caught the wondering maiden in his arms. William silently quitted the room.

Before Charlotte could recover from her unfeigned surprise, the real lover proved how unnecessary was all intercession in his behalf. A flood of lava-like eloquence burst from his lips—he painted his adoration, his sickening despair, his never-dying hope! In a word, he awoke a lively interest in the bosom of the lady, who duly considered the advantages of the match, and the positive certainty of failure in the other quarter. Robert followed up his declaration by the tenderest assiduities; love seemed to have given him new life; the father was consulted; the lady proved willing; and in one short month from the brotherly intercession, the marriage day was duly fixed.

The morning after the announcement of the above fact, Bella was sitting in the parlour, at her piano, with the devoted midshipman at her side. He was evidently bent on some bold act, for he bit his lips, contracted his brows, and paced the room with most alarming strides. Aunt Milly was busy at an adjoining table, copying some choice culinary

precepts from an invaluable family manuscript belonging to our old friend Spraggs. Frederic had given several broad hints respecting her absence, but tuncy suspected his intentions, and having experienced a slighting of her charms, now resolved upon retaliation.

Miss Bella commenced Bayley's popular ballad "Why don't the men propose?" The midshipman, at the end of the first verse, sighed forth—

"I am every day expecting an appointment to one of our frigates about to start on a three years' cruise. Could I bring my wishes to bear, I would leave the service, and devote my days to your disposal."

"My disposal, Mr. Murray?" said Bella.

"You cannot be ignorant of my love—a love which, like the ocean,—ah, Miss Grainger, how can I image its great intensity, its boundless depth?"

"Put half a pint of water in a tin pot," repeated Aunt Milly, as she wrote the extract in her recipe book.

"How can I describe the flames which have so long consumed my heart?"

"Wrap it in a sheet of paper to prevent its being scorched," continued the aggravating spinster.

The middy persevered.

"Think not that fortune influences my wishes. It is your love alone that I desire."

"A poor dish without plenty of rich seasoning."

"If I am fortunate enough to gain your parents' consent, may I not offer you my heart?"

"Your heart, Mr. Murray? Lud, sir, what could I do with it?" said Bella.

"Sprinkle it with sweet herbs and put it in a clean plate."

Bella caught herself tittering, but a short flirtation with the keys of her piano smothered the ominous sound.

"A sailor's heart, Miss Grainger, is generally considered tough—"

"Stew it tender with his legs and wings."

"But it is stuffed full of honour and affection," said the middy, with a perseverance that deserved better treatment; but he was in the hands of a coquette and a slighted woman working her revenge.

"What is it to me, Mr. Murray, what your heart is stuffed with?" said the provoking minx.

"Stuff it with sage and onion," muttered the antiquated miss.

Frederick gulped down a rising oath. He saw Bella vainly endeavouring to smother a laugh, and he regretted that Aunt Milly was not of a kickable sex.

"You do not doubt my love?" said the innamorato.

"I dare not say," replied Bella. "Cupid is a wicked youth, and how are we to prevent his rambles?"

"Run a skewer through both his wings and cut his tail off."

Bella could not restrain her cackinnations. The unlucky sailor burst open the parlour door, and without waiting for his hat, rushed into the street.

He left the city that afternoon, and in due time sailed on a three years' cruise. Aunt Milly was seriously grieved at his departure; she wished to break off his engagement with Bella, not to drive him from the house. The ancient lady knew her chance amongst the household forces to be desperate in the extreme. Uncle Cremorne had savagely repulsed her advances; the book-worm Robert was engaged to her niece Charlotte; and the pretty midshipman had left the city. The only remaining beau, William Singleton, treated her with a constrained politeness that evinced a respect for her age rather than a regard for her charms.

Uncle Cremorne had still a hankering after the pretty Bella; although, as Mr. William Lackaday says, "being in the wale o' years, winter was spreading its snow on the top of his head," still his heart was juvenile, and in the young heart's vocabulary, says another respectable but very different dramatic authority, "there's no such word as fail." The elderly bachelor observed with much pleasure that his soul's darling was yet disengaged, notwithstanding the various couplings in *esse* and *posse*, and resolved to try a little diplomacy in the settlement of his suit. Bella was evidently very partial to her sister Maria, and the lively widow seemed as devotedly attached to the giddy romp. A set of amethysts propitiated the services of the widow in Uncle Cremorne's behalf, although the bashfulness of the bachelor in the detail of his wishes almost brought about another *contré-temps*, as the widow was very willing to believe herself the object of the old gentleman's declarations of love, despite her *tendresse* towards William Singleton.

On the morning of the wedding of Charlotte and Robert, the whole family assembled in the drawing-room to an early lunch, preparatory to the marriage ceremony. As Uncle Cremorne placed his hand on the door knob, the pretty widow suddenly appeared by his side, and whispered—

"Bad news! I have sounded Bella; she can never accept your proposal!"

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense—maidenhood and virgin foolery! Try her again. I must have a wife, I tell you; and I will have a young one. There is a beautiful diamond ring at Bailey's waiting your acceptance. Try again, I say."

"They entered the room. My fair readers will not expect me to describe the bridal party. That the ladies were pretty and well dressed, is certified in the knowledge that they were Philadelphians born; and the gentlemen looked as all men do at a wedding, ridiculously stiff and stupid, excepting Uncle Cremorne, who presented bouquets to the ladies in the spirit of '76, and insisted upon fitting various pairs of kid gloves on the digital extremities of the ladies with the grace of a *preux chevalier*.

"Pray, Miss Bella, do you remember our conversation at the commencement of the present year, Leap Year?" said Mrs. Grainger, in her youngest daughter, in a tone of good-humoured irony. "Was I not right, Miss, in my divinations?"

"La, mamma, what do you mean?"

"You were rather discontented in the appreciation of your position, and spoke slightly of your parent's exertions in your behalf. I was compelled to remind you of your sex's privilege; and in answer to your grumbings, supposed the chance of your widowed sister's second marriage before you had achieved your maiden offering at the shrine of Hymen. Mr. Cremorne's attentions and the suit of garnets worn by your sister Maria, can lead but to one conclusion, that she has accepted his offer, the result of their recent close conferences. Charlotte is on the point of being united to Robert Singleton, a most eligible match, but the *unattractive* Bella remains single—without even a suppository beau in her train."

"Ah, my dear mamma, how severe are your remarks! My sister Charlotte is not married yet, and Maria has not announced her acceptance of Uncle Cremorne."

"Ridiculous evasion! Confess yourself beaten, and return to your allegiance. I will lend you assistance, your sisters shall give you instruction, and by next Leap Year a husband may be secured—"

"Oh no, mamma, not so soon as that."

"So soon! What does the girl mean? Would she die an old maid?"

"There is little fear of that, my dear madam," said William Singleton, the handsome elder brother, Mr. Grainger's partner, who had listened with evident interest to the above dialogue; "I have had the happiness to call this lady my wife for the last two months."

"Dearest mamma," said Bella, throwing herself on Mrs. Grainger's neck, "forgive the only act of disobedience ever committed by your child. The man most desired by my sisters, as they owned in our private councils, neglected them and privately avowed himself my lover. You called me unattractive. I was a spoiled and petted girl. I refused William's application, unless he aided me in my revenge and promised to keep the matter secret. Papa joined our plot; he knew you had no objection to the match, and he wanted to tease you a bit in return for the scolding you gave him about the pretty housemaid you discharged so suddenly. Dear mamma, do forgive me—own I am not unattractive—and I'll never do so any more!"

Mrs. Grainger fumed, fretted and blustered; and, in strict accordance with the rules laid down by the sex on such occasions, burst into tears and left the room. Her husband followed, with Bella, and the bride and bridegroom, leaving Uncle Cremorne and the widow in proximity and in a pretty predicament.

"Thus ends your hope," said the lady; "Bella is lost to you and the diamond ring is lost to me."

"I don't know that," said uncle. "The lady is gone, beyond a doubt. You, I believe, had some designs upon the gentleman. We are both flung from our saddles, and severely kicked in the descent; but there's no use in owning ourselves beaten. You heard what Mrs. Grainger surmised about our engagement; let us declare it fact. I

want and will have a wife; you are still young and pretty enough for my purpose, and I'm not as old as I look. What say you—yes or no? Look sharp, and let us settle it before this snivelling is over.”

Of course, the lady consented to the proposal; the disclosure did not much surprise the party; and, to make it look like an old affair, they were united that very day by the same functionary who officiated for Charlotte and Robert Singleton. Mr. Grainger made his peace with his wife by presenting her with a figured velvet dress of peculiar richness; and when Bella entered the drawing-room, on her wedding day, which occurred within the year, attired in a simple robe of virgin white, the little gipsy once more stood before the vast mirror

that leaned from the mantel-piece, and viewing her ripe and pouting lips, her large moist blue eyes, her arched brows, o'ershadowed by the glossy ringlets where “the blind boy-god” would not disdain to dwell, her swelling bust, with “scarce an eagle's talon in the waist,” she turned archly to her mamma, and said—

“Do you really think me unattractive?”

Aunt Milly retired with her cookery books to Bucks county, and is, at this moment, desperately engaged in an attempt to subjugate a Dutch farmer, devoted to his pigs and his pipe, and who declines marriage till the stock of the United States Bank is again at par.